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Will the New Year Come To-night, Mamma ?

[This beautiful poem was first published in 1860, in "Our Schoolday Visitor." Its author, Cora M. Eager, has passed away from earth, but her poem lives and has been read by thousands. Notwithstanding its length we cannot deny it a place in our New Year number.]

WILL the New Year come to-night, mamma? I'm tired of waiting so ;
My stocking hung by the chimney side full three long days ago ;
I run to peep within the door at early morning light,—
'Tis empty still—O say, mamma, will the New Year come to-night?

Will the New Year come to-night, mamma? The snow is on the hill,

And the ice must be two inches thick upon the meadow's rill ;
I heard you tell papa, last night, his son must have a sled,
(I didn't mean to hear, mamma,) and a pair of skates, you said.

I prayed for just these very things, mamma, O, I shall be full of glee,

And the orphan boys in the village school will all be envying me ;
But I'll give them toys, and lend them books, and make their New Year glad,

For God, you say, takes back his gifts when little folks are bad.

And won't you let me go, mamma, upon the New Year's day,
And carry something nice and warm to poor old Widow Gray?
I'll leave the basket near the door, within the garden gate.

Will the New Year come to-night, mamma? It seems so long to wait !

* * * * *

The New Year comes to-night, mamma—I saw it in my sleep ;
My stocking hung so full, I thought—mamma, what makes you weep?

But it only held a little shroud—a shroud, and nothing more ;
And an open coffin, made for me, was standing on the floor !

It seemed so very strange, indeed, to find *such* gifts instead
Of all the toys I wished so much—the story books and sled ;
But while I wondered what it meant, you came with tearful joy,
And said, "Thou'lt find the New Year first. God calleth thee,
my boy !"

It is not all a dream, mamma—I know it must be true ;
But have I been so bad a boy, God taketh me from you?
I don't know what papa will do when I am laid to rest,
And you will have no Willie's head to fold upon your breast.

The New Year comes to-night, mamma—your cold hand on my cheek,

And raise my head a little more—it seems so hard to speak ;
You needn't fill my stocking now, I cannot go and peep,—
Before the morrow's sun is up, I'll be so sound asleep.

I shall not want the skates, mamma, I'll never need the sled ;
But won't you give them both to Blake, who hurt me on the head?

He used to hide my books away, and tear the pictures, too ;
But now he'll know that I forgive, as then I tried to do.

And, if you please, mamma, I'd like the story books and slate
To go to Frank, the drunkard's boy, you wouldn't let me hate ;
And, dear mamma, you won't forget, upon the New Year's day,
The basketful of something nice for poor old Widow Gray.

The New Year comes to-night, mamma—it seems so very soon—
I think God didn't hear me ask for just another June ;

I know I've been a thoughtless boy, and made you too much care,

And may be, for your sake, mamma, He doesn't hear my prayer.

There's one thing more ; my pretty pets, the robin and the dove,
O, keep for you and dear papa, and teach them how to love ;
The garden rake, the little hoe—you'll find them nicely laid
Upon the garret floor, mamma, the place where last I played.

I thought to need them both so much when summer comes again,
To make my garden by the brook that trickles through the glen ;

I thought to gather flowers, too, beside the forest walk,
And sit beneath the apple tree where once we sat to talk.

It cannot be ; but you will keep the summer flowers green,
And plant a few—don't cry, mamma—a very few, I mean,
Where I'm asleep. I'd sleep so sweet beneath the apple tree,
Where you and robin, in the morn, may come and sing to me.

The New Year comes—good night, mamma—"I lay me down to sleep,

I pray the Lord"—tell poor papa—"the Lord my soul to keep ;
If I"—how cold it seem ! how dark !—kiss me, I cannot see ;
The New Year comes to-night, mamma, the old year—dies with me.

For the Myrtle.

Only a Week.

CHAPTER VIII.



O excited and frightened was John after he touched the ground, that he hardly knew what to do first. Alf, roused out of a deep sleep, and shocked by the rude blow that he had received in falling from the carriage, was for a moment helpless.

John's first thought was that the men would surely stop and try to recapture them; and the determination to escape sharpened his wits. The darkness was in his favor. Seizing Alf by the arms he drew him quickly across the road and into the wood that was beside it.

"What are you doing?" said Alf, beginning to rouse himself.

"Hush! hush!" said John, in a hoarse whisper, "don't speak aloud. Our very lives depend upon our silence."

Alf could not understand all this, but he knew John was in earnest, and he obeyed him as he would have done if he had heard the voice of his father commanding him. A sense of the situation crept over him when he heard a carriage driven rapidly past where they were lying, and a voice say:

"It was somewhere not far from here that the whelps slipped their leash. Stop the horse, and we will soon find them."

"Halloo," shouted a coarse voice in the darkness.

John put his hand tightly over Alf's mouth to prevent his answering.

"Halloo! I say. Answer me, you runaways. Stop the carriage," he continued to his companion, "let me get out, I will soon find 'em. They can't be far away."

"I tell you it is folly to waste time on these boys. We shall more than likely lose our night's work by the means."

"Well, I tell you that we *must* find them. They have overheard our plans and will betray us."

"What difference will our finding them make about that? If they have overheard us, they have, and we could neither stuff cotton into their ears, or their memories, if we were to find them."

"No!" but we might stop their tongues with threats."

"Or stop them entirely, if threats failed, eh?"

"Stop them we must."

While these words were being spoken, the horse had been stopped, one of the men had jumped from the carriage, and was groping around in the darkness.

"Boys! boys! answer me, I say. It is no use your trying to hide yourselves, I am sure to find you."

No answer came. The boys lay perfectly still, scarcely daring to breathe. They held one another's hands tightly. The man stumbled and groped along, sometimes going away from them, and sometimes coming so close, that they could almost touch him.

"Come on," said the man in the carriage impatiently, "we are losing time."

"Let me take the whip, I will soon bring them to life with that."

Getting the carriage whip, he slashed right and left with it, in and out of the road, over and through the bushes in the wood. Twice the lash fell upon the boy's legs, but they did not cry out.

"Oh come along," said the man in the carriage, getting more and more impatient. "I tell you, if those boys ran when they left us, (as it is altogether probable they did) they are half a mile from here by this time."

"Then will you drive after them, if I will get in?"

"I don't see any possible use in it."

"Why I tell you they will betray us if we do not find them."

"They will not be likely to find any one to listen to their story before daylight, and we can get our work done, and be far enough out of the reach of their tongues before that time."

"But I would rather be sure."

"Why! I tell you, you cannot be sure. Swiftmess is our only safety."

"Just to please me, drive west one half mile. If we do not find them in that distance I will give up the search."

"Well, get in then. If I must do foolish a thing to please you, I will."

In another moment the horse was going in a fast trot toward the west, and the boys dared to breathe and hope for safety. Alf was the first to speak.

"Do tell me, John, what is all this about?"

"Why, those men are robbers, house-breakers, murderers, and I don't know what beside."

"How do you know?"

"I will tell you some time, but just now we have no time to lose: They will be back here in a few moments, and we must take ourselves farther out of their way."

The boys stood on their feet, and Alf said: "Where shall we go?"

"The road is the most unsafe place that we can find. So we must go farther into the wood," replied John.

"That is true, only let us make haste in whatever we do; for those men will not be many minutes gone."

This prophecy proved true. The boys went back from the road a little way, found a huge tree lying on the ground, and crept under so as to be sheltered by it, and scarcely had they thus hidden themselves, when they heard the carriage coming again at a furious rate. They could hear the voices of the men loud and angry, but they were too far away to understand what they were saying. The tones chilled their blood, and they crept close together, thanking God in their hearts that he had permitted them such a fortunate escape.

It was a long time after the carriage was out of hearing, before the boys dared to stir from their position, or speak a word to each other. At last John drew a long breath, and said:

"I think we can get up safely now, they will not be very likely to come back."

"Well, pray tell me," said Alf, "what it all means. I was pushed very suddenly out of dream-land, to a chapter of horrors, and I would like to have it explained."

"Why, these men, I tell you, are robbers."

"How do you know it?"

"I have the testimony from their own lips. While you were asleep, they talked together of their plan for robbing a house, this very night, of six thousand dollars."

"Whose house?"

"A man by the name of Holmes, that lives not very far from here."

"How dare they talk of robbing, before you?"

"They thought we were both asleep."

"How came you to be awake?"

"I have not slept much to-night, for I felt suspicious of these men from the first, and when they began to talk about house-breaking, it pinned my eyes open, you may be sure."

"But how came you to think of breaking away from them in such a desperate manner?"

"They began to talk about pressing us into the service, and I couldn't stand it any longer."

"What! did they talk of making thieves of us?"

"Yes."

"What an escape we have had."

"Yes, it is dreadful to think what might have happened."

"But you almost broke my neck, and ran the risk of breaking your own, in getting out of their clutches."

"I know it, but I thought it would be better for us to have broken necks, than to fall into the hands of these wicked men."

"But," said Alf, "How strange it is, that they should have turned out to be so bad."

"I don't know about that, I suppose there are a good many bad men in the world. You was going to believe them all good, until you proved them to be wicked. This time I think you have tried the experiment to your own satisfaction."

"Why yes, I don't know but I have."

"I think you will not be quite so ready to take men on trust next time."

"Possibly not. And yet I don't believe this kind of luck would happen to us again in half a life-time."

"Well, for my part, one such experience is enough for me. I don't think I shall ride with strangers in the night again soon."

"What shall we do next? That seems to be our most important question just now."

"Keep off from the road till daylight. That is one thing that we *must* certainly do."

"Why, are you afraid that they will find us again?"

"I am not inclined to give them the opportunity."

MILD persuasion is the only means of reaching a man's inner self. "Round came the north wind and swept down upon the rosebud, saying, 'Give me a kiss.' But the rosebud answered 'No!' Round came the east wind and swept down upon the rosebud, saying, 'Give me a kiss.' But the rosebud answered 'No!' Then came the south wind, blowing mildly and lovingly, and the rosebud kissed it."—*Beecher*.



A New Year's Gift.

You have birds in a cage, and you've beautiful flowers,
 But you haven't at your house what we have at ours;
 'Tis the prettiest thing that you ever did see,
 Just as dear and as precious as precious can be;
 'Tis my own baby sister, just seven days old;
 And too little for any but grown folks to hold.
 O, I know you would love her; she's sweet as a rose,
 And she has such a queer, tiny bit of a nose,
 And the dearest and loveliest pink little toes,
 Which, I tell mother, seem only made to be kissed;
 And she keeps her wee hand doubled up in a fist.

She is quite without hair, but she's beautiful eyes,
 And she always looks pretty, except when she cries.
 And what name we shall give her there's no one can tell,
 For my father says Sarah, and mother likes Belle;
 And my great uncle John—he's an old-fashioned man—
 Wants her named, for his wife that is dead, Mary Ann,
 But the name I have chosen the darling to call
 Is a name that is prettier far than them all;
 And to give it to baby my heart is quite set—
 It is Violet Martha Rose Stella Marzette.

Picture Poems.



For the Myrtle.

Purring When You're Pleased.

FANNY and Gussy were looking on to see the kitten have her breakfast. It was New Year's morning, and Fanny had tied a piece of bright red ribbon round kitty's neck, and made a very neat bow, and this was kitty's New Year's present. The great yellow pan with a pint of milk in it, was set for the cat and kitten every day, so you could not call that a New Year's present, but the scarlet ribbon was something extra in honor of

the day. Some of my readers will think it is very extravagant to give the cat and kitten a whole pint of sweet warm milk, but that was in a farmhouse, where they have plenty and plenty of milk, I can't tell you how much,—so much that a pint or even a quart for kitty's breakfast would be thought nothing of.

The old cat, whose name is Toosy, rubbed against Mary's knees, and kitty put her tongue into the milk, and from both those furry little

throats came that dear little noise we all know so well. If you could put your finger under their chins, you would *feel* it too. What is it? Purring. Why does a kitty purr? Because she is pleased. Once in a great while you see a sulky cat, who may be ever so much pleased in his secret heart, but he will not let anybody know it. The milk tastes sweet; the sunshine is warm and makes him feel good all over; the cushion is soft, and he lies luxuriously stretched out; he enjoys your caress as you stop to pat him on the head, or tickle him very gently under the right ear; but he is a silent cat, whatever he enjoys he keeps to himself and says nothing. Not that he cannot purr; for if you are the earliest down stairs in the morning, he condescends for about five minutes to be as musical as possible as he rubs back and forwards against your feet. But after that he is silent all day long except when he *meows*, which is not unfrequent. "What a horrid, sulky, uninteresting cat!" you say, "that's not the kind of a pet I like."

You're quite right. And do you know that this applies to you, as well as to kitty? "Purring when you're pleased," is as much your duty as it is kitty's. Shall I explain, or do you guess it? Purring is kitty's way of saying "Thank you!"—"Oh how nice!"—and showing that she feels happy. To be ready with pleasant words and grateful expressions when anybody does you a favor,—to be sunshiny, and let others know if you enjoy what they do for you,—is your way to purr.

Will you take it for a rule in the New Year, "Purr, when you're pleased!" M. M. R.

Encouraging the Scholar.

"You did me ever so much good," said one of my scholars a few days since.

"How?" I asked.

"Oh! a word you said to one of my friends about me. It did me ever so much good."

"What was it? I have forgotten."

"You said I had good lessons, and was a comfort to you in the class. It encouraged me, I can tell you. I had tried to get my lessons before, but I tried harder after that, if only to please you. I've cared more for Sunday School ever since."

Ah! I thought, as my scholar left me, if a word thus unconsciously dropped has done so much good, how many words of encouragement I might intentionally give!

A Legend of the Northland.

AWAY, away in the Northland,
Where the hours of the day are few,
And the nights are so long in winter,
They can not sleep them through:

Where they harness the swift reindeer
To the sledges when it snows;
And the children look like bears' cubs,
In their funny, furry clothes.

They tell them a curious story—
I don't believe 'tis true;
And yet you may learn a lesson,
If I tell the tale to you.

Once, when the good St. Peter
Lived in the world below,
And walked about it preaching,
Just as he did, you know;

He came to the door of a cottage,
Just as the day was done,
And asked the woman making cakes,
To give him a single one.

So she made a very little cake,
But as it baking lay,
She looked at it, and thought it seemed
Too large to give away.

Therefore she kneaded another,
And still a smaller one;
But it looked, when she turned it over,
As large as the first had done.

Then she took a tiny scrap of dough
And rolled and rolled it flat;
And baked it thin as a wafer—
But she couldn't part with that.

For she said, "My cakes that seem too small
When I eat them myself,
Are yet too large to give away,"
So she put them on a shelf.

Then good Saint Peter grew angry,
For he was hungry and faint;
And surely such a woman,
Was enough to provoke a saint.

And he said: "You are far too selfish,
To dwell in a human form,
To have both food and shelter,
And fire to keep you warm.

"Now you shall build as the birds do,
And shall get your scanty food
By boring, and boring, and boring,
All day in the hard dry wood."

Then she went up through the chimney,
Never speaking a word;
And out of the top flew a woodpecker,
For she was changed to a bird.

She had a scarlet cap on her head,
And that was left the same,
But all the rest of her clothes were burned
Black as a coal in the flame.

And every country school-boy
Has seen her in the wood;
Where she lives in the trees to this very day
Boring and boring for food.

And this is the lesson she teaches;
Live not for yourself alone,
Lest the needs you will not pity
Shall one day be your own.

Give plenty of what is given you,
Listen to pity's call;
Don't think the little you give is great,
And the much you get is small.

Now my little boy, remember that,
And try to be kind and good,
When you see the woodpecker's sooty dress,
And see her scarlet hood.

You mayn't be changed to a bird, though you live
As selfishly as you can;
But you will be changed to a smaller thing—
A mean and selfish man.

Phæbe Cary.



Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

—The Taunton (Mass.) Universalist parish presents a Nebraska Sunday School a set of text and other valuable books.

MAINE.

—The Universalist Sabbath School in Buckfield, Me., has been quite prosperous during the past year. Attendance 75; penny contributions \$21. This is a school where there has been no regular ministry of our faith for a long time. The Superintendent and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews have been constant and untiring in their work for the school.

NEW YORK.

—Minnie Oakes, Fannie Oakes and Annie Voorhies—not one of them fifteen years old—got up a fair at their grandmother's house in New York, in aid of Dr. Ryder's Sunday School in Chicago. The amount raised was \$115.

—The School at Fort Plain has been "resuscitated after a long sleep," and seems now to be very wide awake indeed. It is about to add to its library, which is an excellent sign of prosperity.

PENNSYLVANIA.

—Rev. H. F. Miller says of the Sunday School at Girard, "The singing is fine and the school in good working order. Its concerts are popular and draw crowded houses, adding materially to its finances. Such women as Mrs. B. F. Rockwell and some others there, will make any Sunday School a success.

INDIANA.

—A Sunday School has been organized in connection with the Universalist Church in Waldron, Indiana.

Past and Present.

"New England," says Dr. Cotton Mather in 1718, "is now so far improved, as to have the best part of two hundred meeting houses." What would he say now, to find somewhere between five and six thousand?

New Heavens and Earth.

The Bible abounds in figurative language. In the third chapter of the second Epistle of Peter, we read of a "new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Now what are we to understand by this? That the literal heavens every where above and around us are to be destroyed? That we are to have a new supply of worlds instead of these stars which now shine upon us? And is a new planet to take the place of this earth?

Nothing like this is intended in the use of this language. What then is meant? We answer, this: The early Christians were to look for a new state of things to come to the world by the preaching and prevalence of Christian truth. A new moral or spiritual creation was to take place with mankind. "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new." Christian truth and righteousness were to make the world so much better, that it might properly be called a new world. To those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him, "all things have passed away, and all things have become new." God, and man, and life, and duty, and heaven are seen in a clearer light than ever before. This heaven will come to earth. when all souls here are living in obedience to Christ. Young reader, do not forget this interpretation

Rules of Living.

Hugh Peters, an English preacher of the seventeenth century, left as a legacy to his daughter, in the year 1660, some "Rules of Living," of which other persons might reap the benefit if they would conform to them.

"Whosoever would live long and blessed, let him observe these following rules: Let his

Thoughts be divine, lawful, godly.

Talk be little, honest, true.

Works be profitable, holy, charitable.

Manners be grave, courteous, cheerful.

Diet be temperate, convenient, frugal.

Apparel be sober, neat, comely.

Will be confident, obedient, ready.

Sleep be moderate, quiet, seasonable.

Prayers be short, devout, often, fervent.

Recreation be lawful, brief, reasonable.

Speak the Right Word.

"Mother says it's of no use to get a lesson from the Bible."

So said a scholar one Sabbath to her teacher in the Sabbath School. The teacher not having lesson-books for a few Sabbaths had asked the scholars to commit to memory a short lesson from the New Testament. But this mother thought it of "no use" to get such a lesson; and so the little girl came to the school with her mother's objection in her mind. How careful of their words should mothers be. Many an evil has grown out of that saying of a parent in reference to some duty enjoined by faithful teachers on their children. "It is of no use." They ought to know that good impressions made on the minds of their little ones—good principles fixed therein. will be of much good use to them through life.

What Bishop Newton Says.

Bishop Newton was a very distinguished divine of the Church of England. He makes this statement in his published writings:

"God is love, and he would rather not have given life, than render that life a torment and curse to all eternity. Imagine such a state of misery you may, but you can never seriously believe it, nor reconcile it with God and goodness."



Life of the Saviour.

LESSON LXVII.

JESUS AT THE HOUSE OF MARY AND MARTHA.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

SCRIPTURE, — Luke x. 38-42.

Question. — To what place did Jesus go when he escaped the fury of the Jews?

Answer. — Luke x. 38.

NOTE. Bethany was a village situated on the other side of the Mount of Olives, about three miles from the city. It was, therefore, on the eastern slope of the mountain.

Q. — Into what house was he received at Bethany?

A. — Luke x. 38.

Q. — What was the name of the sister who resided with her?

A. — Luke x. 39.

Q. — Of what did Martha do too much?

A. — Luke x. 40.

NOTE. Martha, doubtless, labored under the wrong opinion of the Jews, that Jesus was to be the earthly king of the Jewish nation, and she wished to entertain him in a manner worthy of a king. Therefore she attempted to make a feast for him.

Q. — What was Mary doing while her sister was so busy preparing a feast?

A. — Luke x. 39.

Q. — What did Martha come to Jesus and say to him of the conduct of her sister?

A. — Luke x. 40.

Q. — What was the Saviour's reply to her question?

A. — Luke x. 41.

Q. — How many varieties of food did Jesus say were necessary?

A. — Luke x. 42.

Q. — What did he say of Mary's course?

A. — Luke x. 42.

Mary saw something more in Jesus than a king of the Jews. His words were the bread of life to her, and she did not permit too much concern for temporal things to make her neglect

eternal things. And Jesus assured Martha that Mary should not be deprived of the bread from heaven.



Enigma No. 1.

My first is in Luther, a martyr for truth.
 My second is in Naomi, but not in Ruth.
 My third is in Levi, one of the twelve.
 My fourth is in Elisha, who in a field did delve.
 My fifth is in Olive, a mount of fame.
 My sixth is in Aaron, who from Egypt came.
 My seventh is in Samuel, who was chosen so young.
 My eighth is in Absalom, who on an oak tree hung.
 My ninth is in Nathaniel, a man without guile.
 My tenth is in Solomon, whose last days were vile.
 My eleventh is in Ataliah, who died in her guilt.
 My twelfth is in Mount Moriah, where the Temple was built.
 My thirteenth is in Joseph, who was sold in the East.
 My fourteenth is in Christ, who is our high priest.
 My whole is a command He gave unto all,
 Which if we heed, will make sweetness of gall. I. T. S.

Enigma No. 2.

W, has its beginning
 In the righteous fear of God;
 I, the ransomed, chosen people,
 Forty years the desert trod.
 N the mount from which a prophet
 Did the promised land behold;
 T was built on Mount Moriah,
 By King Solomon of old.
 E, a brother sold his birthright,
 And repented but in vain;
 R, a son of Solomon;
 Winter cold is here again.

Little Sower.

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